INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO/FDIS 13611

Interpreting services — Community interpreting – Requirements and recommendations

Services d'interprétation — Interprétation en milieu social — Exigences et recommandations

Reference number
ISO/FDIS 13611:2023(E)

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Contents

Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO document should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Language and terminology*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Translation, interpreting and related technology*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 13611:2014), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

— the document has been elevated to a requirements and recommendations International Standard;

— the structure of the text has been modelled on ISO 18841:2018;

— the content has been streamlined for clarity.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

This document was developed in response to a worldwide need to accommodate the growing linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity of people who interact via spoken and signed communication. Community interpreting, also called "public service interpreting", is essential to enable people to access community services available to members of society, which they would be otherwise unable to access owing to a language barrier as a result of not understanding the language of service delivery.

Such community services can occur in several communicative settings and can include, amongst others, the following:

— public institutions (local authorities, schools, universities, community centres, etc.);

— social services (refugee boards, self-help centres, etc.);

— business and industry services (housing, real estate, insurance, financial services, etc.);

— faith-based organizations (rituals, ceremonies, etc.);

— media organizations (television, internet broadcasters, etc.);

— emergency services (natural disasters, pandemics, etc.).

Community interpreting can include services provided in legal settings (police stations, courts, prisons, etc.) to facilitate equal access to justice. Legal interpreting is addressed in ISO 20228. In a number of countries, legal interpreting, a broad field that includes court interpreting, is not considered part of community interpreting. Similarly, healthcare interpreting is addressed in ISO 21998. In a number of countries, healthcare interpreting is not considered part of community interpreting. However, in several countries, community interpreting includes services provided in legal and/or healthcare-related communicative events, with acknowledgement that these services require additional training.

Community interpreting has become established as a profession. There are various codes and standards for specific settings but there are currently no universally agreed requirements for community interpreters. It is important to stress that interpreting differs from translation as it deals with oral or signed communication occurring in real time.

Interpreting services — Community interpreting — Requirements and recommendations

1 Scope

This document specifies requirements and recommendations for the provision of community interpreting services. It establishes the foundational principles and practices necessary to ensure quality community interpreting services for all language communities (spoken and/or signed), for end users, as well as for clients, and for community interpreters.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 20109, *Simultaneous interpreting — Equipment — Requirements*

ISO 20539:—[1]), *Translation, interpreting and related technology — Vocabulary*

ISO 24019, *Simultaneous interpreting delivery platforms — Requirements and recommendations*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 20539:— and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

3.1 Terms related to interpreting activities

3.1.1
interpret
render spoken or signed information from a *source language* (3.4.3) into a *target language* (3.4.4) in spoken or signed form, conveying both the meaning and *language register* (3.4.9) of the *source language content* (3.4.6)

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.1.10]

3.1.2
interpreting
interpretation
rendering spoken or signed information from a *source language* (3.4.3) into a *target language* (3.4.4) in spoken or signed form, conveying both the meaning and *language register* (3.4.9) of the *source language content* (3.4.6)

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.1.11]

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1)   Under preparation. Stage at the time of publication: ISO/FDIS 20539:2023.

3.1.3
community interpreting
public service interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) that enables people to access services available to society as a whole, and which they would otherwise be unable to access owing to a barrier to communication resulting from the use of different languages

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.27, modified — "owing to a language barrier" changed to "owing to a barrier to communication resulting from the use of different languages".]

3.1.4
mode
established method for the delivery of spoken language *interpreting* (3.1.2) and signed language interpreting

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.11]

3.1.5
consecutive interpreting
mode (3.1.4) of *interpreting* (3.1.2) performed after the *speaker* (3.4.7) or *signer* (3.4.8) pauses

Note 1 to entry: *Interpreters* (3.3.2) can use *note-taking* (3.1.9) to help in rendering lengthy passages.

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.13]

3.1.6
simultaneous interpreting
mode (3.1.4) of *interpreting* (3.1.2) performed while a *speaker* (3.4.7) or *signer* (3.4.8) is still speaking or signing

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.12]

3.1.7
whispered interpreting
chuchotage
simultaneous interpreting (3.1.6) where the *interpreter* (3.3.2) speaks very quietly in close proximity to the listeners and uses no *interpreting* (3.1.2) equipment

Note 1 to entry: Whispered interpreting is used for interpreting to a very small number of listeners, ideally one or two.

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.15 modified — "participants" has been changed to "listeners and uses no interpreting equipment" and Note 2 to entry has been deleted.]

3.1.8
healthcare interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) health-related communication between patients, accompanying persons and treatment providers, or administrators, who do not use the same language

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.29, modified — Admitted term deleted.]

3.1.9
legal interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) at *communicative settings* (3.2.2) related to the law

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.25]

3.1.10
note-taking
technique in *consecutive interpreting* (3.1.5) used by *interpreters* (3.3.2) for remembering, conceptualizing and summarizing information

Note 1 to entry: Note-taking is highly individual and can involve a mixture of symbols, abbreviations, words and diagrams.

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.14]

3.1.11
sight translation
sight interpreting
rendering written *source language content* (3.4.6) into the *target language* (3.4.4) in the form of spoken language or signed language

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.17]

3.1.12
distance interpreting
remote interpreting
interpreting (3.1.2) of a *speaker* (3.4.7) or *signer* (3.4.8) in a different location from that of the *interpreter* (3.3.2), enabled by information and communications technology

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.16]

3.2   Terms related to communicative events with interpreting

3.2.1
communicative event
encounter between two or more parties during which information is transmitted

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.32]

3.2.2
communicative setting
environment where an interaction between interlocutors takes place

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.31]

3.2.3
domain
sphere of knowledge or activity

Note 1 to entry: A domain can have its own culture, social context and linguistic characteristics.

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.2.1]

3.3   Terms related to people or organizations involved in interpreting

3.3.1
interpreting service provider
ISP
interpreter (3.3.2) or organization making *interpreting* (3.1.2) available to a *client* (3.3.4)

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.20]

3.3.2
interpreter
person who *interprets* ([3.1.1](#))

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.1.13]

3.3.3
community interpreter
public service interpreter
interpreter ([3.3.2](#)) who specializes in *community interpreting* ([3.1.3](#))

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.28, modified — "qualified to perform" has been changed to "who specializes in".]

3.3.4
client
customer
person, or organization, who enters into a formal agreement for the provision of a service

Note 1 to entry: The formal agreement can, for example, take the form of a contract or an interdepartmental service agreement between units of an organization.

Note 2 to entry: The client can be the *end user* ([3.3.5](#)), but this does not have to be the case.

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.2.9]

3.3.5
end user
person or group of persons that ultimately uses the service delivered

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.2.8, modified — "a service" has been changed to "the service delivered".]

3.4 Terms related to language, language content and language competences

3.4.1
'A' language
primary language or its strict equivalent of which the *interpreter* ([3.3.2](#)) has complete command and into which the interpreter *interprets* ([3.1.1](#)) from all their other 'A' languages, *'B' languages* ([3.4.2](#)) or *'C' languages* ([3.4.3](#))

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.8]

3.4.2
'B' language
language in which the *interpreter* ([3.3.2](#)) is proficient, but which is not their primary language or its strict equivalent

Note 1 to entry: An interpreter *interprets* ([3.1.1](#)) into this language from one or more other languages.

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.4.9]

3.4.3
source language
language from which content is *translated* ([3.5.1](#)) or *interpreted* ([3.1.1](#))

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.1.3]

3.4.4
target language
language into which content is *translated* ([3.5.1](#)) or *interpreted* ([3.1.1](#))

[SOURCE: ISO 20539:—, 3.1.4]